

Eric Dolphy's "Miss Ann" Variants

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Part I - Introduction/Purpose:

Jazz musicians before the “out” or avant-garde period and musicians today improvise over a composed model, henceforth deemed catalytic referent (c.r.). From the earliest years of jazz through the bebop period these models included show tunes or popular songs of the day, many having a chorus length of 32 measures. Common repertoire also included blues forms of which the twelve-measure variety became the most common.

This project explores the interrelationships of several catalytic referents composed by the multi-instrumentalist Eric Dolphy (b. 6-20-28 d.6-29-64) which are related to the twelve-measure blues form. The titles of the pieces are "Serene", "245", "Les", "In the Blues", "Iron Man", and "Miss Ann". The improvised solos of three separate recordings of “Miss Ann” will be explored to attempt to gain insight on characteristic melodic and rhythmic elements and how those logics are aligned with harmonic and formal aspects of the c.r.

I have tried to maintain as high degree of accuracy as possible in transcribing the examples. Sometimes in the alto saxophone solos the sheer celerity of the improvisation posed perplexing issues for the transcription process. In these cases I have employed an approximate spatial notation scheme and used a line for a pitch contour scheme. It is essential to hear the recorded works while viewing the transcriptions. The lead sheet type format of the pieces are necessarily composite versions partially as the essence of jazz is variation but also because of the different approaches of rhythm sections, particularly the varied manner in which pianists voiced the harmonic scheme of the c.r. Where multiple recordings of the pieces were available the

changes and melody were cross-checked.

This project was undertaken in an effort to add discrete documentation and analysis in order that Eric Dolphy's music be better understood. During his day jazz critics who did not back up their adjectives with insight or transcriptions often maligned Dolphy. Consider John Tynan's performance review published in Downbeat in 1961:

I happen to object to the musical nonsense being peddled in the name of jazz by John Coltrane and his acolyte, Eric Dolphy.... Melodically and harmonically their improvisations struck my ear as gobbledegook

I decided to transcribe the solos for "Miss Ann" because it is an original piece that Dolphy recorded throughout his relatively short recording career and one in which the fidelity of the three variants selected is not as substandard as many recordings of Dolphy in Europe are. Still, there are some balance and equalization problems with both the Last Date and Stockholm Sessions variants which impede the transcription process. All transcriptions used were taken and notated by the writer without the use of a computer or published sources and are found in the musical examples accompanying this text. The musical examples should be read together with the paper.

The two main sources for biographical and discographical information are the publication Eric Dolphy: A Musical Biography and Discography by Vladimir Simosko and Barry Tepperman and the Eric Dolphy website which is maintained by Alan Saul. Another source which gave impetus to this project was the 1989 publication The Importance of Being Eric Dolphy by Raymond Horricks which contained three transcriptions by Ken Rattenbury. Unfortunately and

despite the obvious effort devoted to these transcriptions, they contained many inaccuracies and

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were fairly hard to read as published.

Part II - Related Catalytic Referents:

To introduce the reader to both a characteristic harmonic approach and to the precursors to Eric Dolphy's "Miss Ann" we look at his "245" in the musical examples. This c.r. is a twelve measure blues form with several localized harmonic interpolations but retaining the basic pillars that define a blues. A harmonic analysis is given below the head showing chord functions and cyclic movement. The method of analysis used is explained comprehensively by Andrew Jaffe in his book Jazz Theory. (For a basic explanation see the notes accompanying the lead sheets for "245" and "Serene" in the musical examples)

A distinctive substitution in this F blues is B7 for F7. This change takes place at two turning points in the blues phraseology, namely the fourth and eleventh measures of the form. In the first case this alteration can be seen as the tritone substitute for the dominant of IV as it resolves to the subdominant in the following measure. In the 11th measure however the B7 takes the place of the tonic seventh chord and is sustained for two measures building tension by delaying the expected resolution and then leaping a tritone directly to I7. The relationship of the melody to the root (a b13) and Jaki Byard's energetic tremolo on the piano heighten this tension. Although this tritone substitute is not unique, we will see how Dolphy similarly uses a distinctive sonority at the end of the form in other c.r. to provide a staging ground while using the c.r. as a vehicle to improvisation.

Turning to "Serene" we again have a piece based on the twelve-measure blues model which is in obvious alignment to the jazz lineage. Although a blues, there are striking similarities to the standard "Tenderly" by W.Gross, notably the three-note anacrusis to the top of the form which lands on a color tone (the major seventh in "Tenderly" and the ninth in "Serene"). There is also the presence of sub-dominant minor function chords in both as well as the fact that "Tenderly" is often played in Eb major. Dophy recorded an alto saxophone solo of the standard and the harmonic scheme would have been a familiar vehicle. ¹

The aforementioned tritone substitute is again present in the fourth measure of the form as are two other tritone substitutes at other plateaus in the sixth and eighth measures. Two of these substitutions are preceded by a minor seventh chord at the interval of a fourth below this substitute (henceforth the related iimin7) to form the ubiquitous harmonic construct commonly referred to as the "two-five" from the diatonic cadence ii - V7. Looking at the eleventh and twelfth measures of the form we again encounter a substitution for the expected tonic seventh as the resolution is delayed by two measures of subdominant seventh with the melody holding the #11 of the chord.

Next we turn to "Les", the piece that most closely resembles "Miss Ann" formally. These c.r. can be seen as clear derivations of the 12 measure blues with an additional 2 measure sustained sonority that serves to delineate the form. Interestingly, both pieces begin with a four measure drum solo. Both c.r. also have longer phrases of swinging eighth note melodies, which form polychordal or severely altered harmonic implications when sounded with the harmonies

despite their being formed primarily of diatonic and pentatonic materials. This characteristic of

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Dolphy's composed melodies will be encountered again in "Miss Ann" as well as in "Iron Man" and "In the Blues".

At first glance at the first four measures of the melody to "Les" one might speculate based on the pitches of the melody that the harmonies might be B7, E7, B7.... However, the changes being used are the interval of a tritone away. Again the root relation to the relatively simple melody creates a surprisingly fresh sound as the individual melody notes, many of which stressed through repetition, are in the upper strata of extended dominants.

The initial riff-like figure which is repeated in the third measure of the form centers around B traversed through F# and G#. These notes become the #11, b9, and #9 respectively when sounded with the harmony. A b13 (Db or C# enharmonically) is also sounded in the third and fourth measures completing the upper extension to what in jazz parlance is referred to as a (fully) altered chord. This does not mean that during every moment of the local harmonic vicinity there will always be a b9, #9, #11, and b13 sounding, only that this is the general dominant implication generated by the melody and thus an element of the overall c.r. during improvisation. The remainder of the melody is permeated with upper tensions analyzed in the musical examples.

Also noteworthy is the polychordal vamp (E7sus and F#sus7/ C# bass) that is played after two iterations of the head and serves both as a substitute dominant springboard into Dolphy's solo and an outgoing fading modal vamp. This kind of unique sonority being held for a period at the end of the chorus or at a delineative point in the form is found in all of the

transcribed c.r. The point of cadential buildup is not special but the deliberate placement of unexpected pillars creates a propulsive force in the music.

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In Dolphy's "In the Blues" a relatively simple melody is set against some unexpected changes. Diatonic and pentatonic melodic cells are accompanied by extended dominants. The relationship of the melody tones to the harmonies is analyzed in the musical examples. This piece bears a characteristic feature of the 12 measure blues model, namely the move to the subdominant in the fifth measure. That Dolphy chooses to retain this primary function shows that an extended blues tonal system is in use rather than a cyclic or arbitrary system. This expanded system is heard as such when it is grafted upon the long-term history of 12 measure blues models in jazz and thus the system cannot obliterate a most salient feature of the referent (Figure 1). Also noteworthy is the harmony in measures 7,8 and 12. Again we find the tritone substitutes for what would be expected, C7 alt. in place of F#7, G7 in place of the dominant.

Figure 1.

A pared-down 12 measure blues model:

T	--	--	--
SD	--	T	--
SD	D	T	(D)
(cadence -		(tonic	
various		followed	
types)		by turnaround)	

Part III - Miss Ann, Three Variants:

Figure 1 can be seen as the archetype for all the c.r. discussed including "Miss Ann". Although the harmonic scheme of "Miss Ann" does not closely resemble the model above, the phrase logic of the melody and the similarity to "Les" leaves little doubt as to the essential blues

reference. On a major pressing of Eric Dolphy in Europe v.2 still being distributed, track #4, "Les" is erroneously labeled "Miss Ann" which is perhaps another indication that the two c.r.

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were similar enough to be mistaken. As with "Les", the first four measures of the melody of "Miss Ann" imply a similar tonic-subdominant toggle but are harmonized with tritone substitutes of those chords. The specific relation of the melody to the harmony is noted in the musical examples above each note.

The combination of the melody and harmony is similar to "Les", that is, diatonic and pentatonic materials are superimposed upon the upper strata of the harmony. Again the first phrases of the head are traversing many of the intervals, which create the fully altered dominant quality (see musical examples). The second phrase begins at the apex of the normal range of the alto saxophone and descends to its lowest extreme then is followed by a serpentine line (measures 9-12) which sounds as a turnaround would in a 12 measure form but is followed by a mixolydian staging ground in the rhythm section for two measures extending the form of the c.r. to 14 measures, the same as "Les".

As a final introduction to the catalytic referent consider the liner notes to the album Far Cry, "Miss Ann is a sketch by Eric of a girl he knows. 'She's happy and joyful,' Eric adds, and that's how the song is."

Miss Ann solo transcriptions

Perhaps Dolphy's most famous spoken line is uttered after the Last Date variant of "Miss Ann," "When you hear music, after it is over, it's gone in the air. You can never capture it

again.”

The reason for transcribing three variant improvisations over a catalytic referent is

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multifold. Specific questions in combination with accurately documenting musicianship guided the quest: Are there melodic and rhythmic models that are common to all three solos? Are there melodic models that seem to be organized according to the specific harmonic vicinities within the form? How do the elements of the catalytic referent and the tempo at which it is played influence the course of the solo as a whole? Are there instrument-specific aspects of the composed melodies and improvisations? During the transcription process other questions arose about particular aspects of the solos.

The transcriptions were taken at both normal and half speeds, the latter courtesy of a double speed recording played at normal speed. Other than that technology, no other was used and it ultimately became essential that Dolphy's improvisations be understood through a jazz practitioner's ear without the aid of automated pitch trackers and the like. If there are minor errors, I must apologize to the reader. However, nothing has been notated which is merely speculation. Partially sounded notes (ghost notes) are bracketed in the usual way and x noteheads denote implied notes and indicate barely audible notes or probable fingering. The abbreviation port. (for portamento) is used to denote a combination of lipped and fingered pitch inflections.

The first “Miss Ann” solo was recorded on 12-21-61 in Englewood Cliffs, NJ for the album Far Cry just hours after the historic recording Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation by the Ornette Coleman Double Quartet which featured Dolphy on bass clarinet. This is the first known

recording of this tune, and it is also performed at the fastest tempo of all three variants to be discussed (apx. m.m. 256).

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Dolphy's improvisation here is permeated with clear reference to the playing of Charlie Parker including verbatim extracts from Bird solos. There are many long phrases comprised of primarily eighth note lines and a masterful variety of conjunct and disjunct motions, the former frequently involving double chromatic approach cells which ultimately come to rest on a target tone, which either terminates a phrase or initiates a continuing line. Many of the phrases after a rest including the opening notes of the solo on both the Far Cry and Stockholm Sessions variants are initiated with a descending conjunct flurry which swells to a strategic beat, very characteristic of Bird's style. Usually these begin on or near the high C of the alto saxophone. This gesture is much less prevalent in the improvisation on the Last Date variant recorded three and a half years later.

One notable characteristic of Dolphy's style occurs just measures into the solo. Dolphy repeats a particular melodic phrase over separate harmonic vicinities. By the end of the solo, segments of this cell phrase occur nine times over different harmonic vicinities and always with differing metric orientation. Additionally, traces of this cell phrase are found in the other variants recorded years apart. For it to occur so consistently yet with subtle variance indicates that this is probably part of a practiced linear segment firmly entrenched in Dolphy's technique.

As such this represents a characteristic local response that could be called up at any juncture with varied details or omissions and with varied metrical orientation. The result of such

permutational grafting is that features of the line relate to the harmony differently with each new iteration, profiling different elements within the line. At the same time the recurrence of aspects of the cell contributes to the overall homogeneity of the solo. This permutational treatment of Paynter

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melodic materials again points to the influence of the improvisational approach of Charlie Parker.

Another linear feature, which will recur in the other variants, is given exposition in the Far Cry variant. This occurs in the G minor quartal vicinity of the third chorus. The gesture involves a movement from register to register through arpeggiation of the first harmonics of a low C on the saxophone. At different instances incorporation of alternate fingerings and overblowing create ghost tones. Though barely audible as discrete pitches at normal speed, they create micro inflections and add rhythmic vitality. The effect of this quasi-drone generally creates some degree of tension with the harmony of the moment. That is, the center of the saxophone line can readily be heard as its C (concert Eb) while the harmony coming from the bass and piano is centered rather on G minor quartal. This feeling of polycentricity is accentuated by the more pronounced tone quality of the low C and the implications of the lower harmonics being played which serve to reinforce that center. Looking back to chorus 1, measure 6, note the glimpse of this overtone complex despite the absent low C. I will trace this C overtone complex in later variants.

There is not much in the way of extended double-time phrases in the Far Cry variant due to the very fast tempo. The personnel are probably the most properly attuned of the three variants. Roy Haynes is certainly the hardest swinging drummer and Jaki Byard seems to be an

apt match for Dolphy in terms of his harmonic and improvisational approach.²

As we have seen, much of the solo is comprised of a fairly limited number of melodic models (colloquially “licks”) in a variety of permutations. There are also segments that are derived from the composed melody. We will see how some of these models recur in the other two variants of “Miss Ann” recorded later. The intrarrelationships and interrelationships of key

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melodic models are shown in the musical examples and denoted by “intra” and “inter.” followed by the abbreviation for a variant (FC, SS, LD) and a chorus and measure number. Phrase segments that recur are bracketed and color-coded on the Far Cry variant to highlight relationships.

Next we turn to the version of “Miss Ann” recorded on September 5, 1961 in Copenhagen for a Swedish television broadcast and released on the album Stockholm Sessions. Here Dolphy is playing with an ad hoc band that is not entirely attuned to him, nonetheless the performances are quite good and the recording only flawed by the inferior fidelity.

One noticeable difference in this solo in the extended tessitura of the saxophone; Dolphy incorporates more altissimo notes into his solo. We also find a model that will recur in the third variant that may be an outgrowth of phrases played on the Far Cry variant. This is the eighth note chromatic approach to the normal apex of the saxophone (high F#, G) followed by a descending arpeggio. This line can also be heard to be related to the second phrase of the composed melody that begins with high F and Gb. Another relative is found in the third phrase of the composed melody to “Iron Man” recorded in 1963. A set of apex variants appears in the musical examples.

In the extreme high register above these notes, Dolphy's improvisation most often contains disjunct pitches, frequently involving an ascending or descending minor or major third and always with a hard attack and stark tone. This cell occurs with regularity as a terminating gesture in all of the variants of the improvisations on "Miss Ann". The increased tessitura of the horn allows Dolphy to quickly alternate between extreme registers to create the angular lines that

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will come into more prominence in the variant recorded three years later.

Another consideration involves the time feel of the improvisation at points in the second, third, and fourth choruses where I have shifted to spatial or partially spatial notation. Here Dolphy is playing "over" the time as separate from playing in a metrically bound manner. He is also in these places exposing particular sonorities of the saxophone for their own qualities as opposed to profiling the harmonic scheme. Dolphy ends his solo by weaving a succession of twelve distinct pitch classes (Gb-F-A-E-Eb-D-C#-A#-B-C-Ab-G), which usher in the trumpet solo.

The last variant of "Miss Ann" that I have transcribed was recorded June 2, 1964, just 27 days before Dolphy's death. The recording was made with Dutch musicians in Hilversum, Holland and later became the album Last Date. A "live" captive audience of engineers and personnel were present in the studio which gives the impression that this was a live engagement.³ This variant has been written out in ordinary format and in a modular way in which the corresponding measures of the form are aligned vertically. The modular format allows one to see characteristic responses to specific harmonies or vicinities of the form (see transcription).

The tempo is markedly slower than the previous variants, and this I believe facilitates

Dolphy's angular mode and more excursions into double-time. Other considerations are the fact that this is the only variant not to include a trumpet player and that Dolphy improvises a total of ten choruses which is both longer than on previous recordings and much longer than the only other soloist in the group, Misha Mengelberg. So in one formal sense this variant is the least symmetrical. It is also along with this perhaps the most compelling improvisation over this c.r. as we hear Eric Dolphy in his most developed state with seemingly no obstacles.

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From the first phrases of the solo we can hear that both in the selectivity of intervals and flexibility of range Dolphy is performing at a different level and with an awareness of how to incorporate this virtuosity. His tone in this variant is also much more strident and the use of the altissimo is more prevalent. Notes in the low register of the horn are almost always accented, sometimes to such an extent that both the fundamental and the octave harmonic are clearly sounding. While the lower range of the saxophone cannot be extended, the exaggerated attack and blossoming tone intensify the markedly different timbral quality of the lowest range of the horn. Rather than strive for a supple homogeneity Dolphy accentuates the extremes by emphasizing the inherent qualities and dynamic tendencies of the saxophone's different registers. Through his use of registral and timbral variegation Dolphy creates the impression of antiphony with himself.

On a rhythmic level, the first three choruses bear much resemblance to the aforementioned Parker phrase logic. However, Dolphy has grafted his own melodic logic onto that scheme. The combination of the bebop phrase logic with the intervallic selection of many quartal and disjunct intervals lends a quality of boldness or edge to the music. This is intensified

by the audible effort required to execute many of the angular lines and quick rhythms. Dolfy is striving to produce an extreme musical result regardless of the difficulty involved. As an active listener it is hard not to be transfixed by Dolfy's remarkable musical insistence.

I have transcribed all but the fourth and fifth choruses completely. In these choruses, Dolfy is playing extremely fast in a primarily non-metrically bound mode although there is some underlying implication of a double time feel due in part to the greater density of material.

In these

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choruses, Dolfy has altered his rhythmic orientation and gestures of oppositional pitch contours take priority over the frame he has established in the preceding three choruses.

In these modes of astonishing density one is reminded of the ear-gripping Studies for Player Piano of Conlon Nancarrow. Both musics contain a quality of bursting intensity and expansive imagination and both artists were perceived as on the fringe of musical endeavor despite the fact that their musics were actually an expansion of traditional models.

Perhaps it is the juxtaposition of modes of playing that perplexed so many critics and lead them to hide in their closed minds and publish false conclusions about Dolfy and Coltrane. Dolfy's improvisations are too inclusive for the bebop purist.⁴ His way of playing over the time in such a way as to opaque the metric orientation probably caused people anxiety since there was not a much-established precedent for these extreme impressions of temporal dilation and compression in jazz. Actually these impressions are similar to the mutable feel of many earlier jazz players who incorporated this, though to a lesser degree. The vocalization gestures in this section also recall the speech-like inflections that date back to early New Orleans jazz through

the lineage of many players. Johnny Hodges and Cootie Williams, longtime sidemen of Duke Ellington's ensemble, are two players that immediately come to mind that Dolphy would have heard in ample doses. Remember also that Dolphy was in this period playing with Charles Mingus, the legendary jazz composer, many of whose compositions required intermittent shifts back to the portamento swing period style of Johnny Hodges and into the racing neo-bop angular melodies.

It is also important to note that Dolphy is indeed aware of his rhythmic and formal

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orientation within the c.r. and intermittently comes back to confirm this. Consider the jocular reference to the melody of B. Strayhorn's "Take the A Train" which Dolphy aligns over the first four measures of the eighth chorus. There is with this a marked yet brief re-entry to simpler harmonic relations that leads no doubt regarding Dolphy's congruence with the form.

In the third measure the aforementioned quotation is continued resulting in the incidental accentuation of C# over a D7 alt. which is then countered by a hard descending minor third motive (C-A) in the altissimo which accentuates two basic chord tones. The fourth measure anticipates the G minor quartal harmony that comes in the fifth and sixth measures of the c.r. The line in this measure relates to the apex variants already discussed and the variants played on the C overtone series (see musical examples) and finally lands on the low Bb of the saxophone near the downbeat of the fifth measure. Thus we find remnants of instrument-specific maneuvers that occur in the other variants but the exact details vary. Dolphy continues in the next six measures to juxtapose fragments in the altissimo with the lowest register. The pitch selections

can all be shown to relate to the chord tones of the harmony but the unpredictable angular contour imparts intrigue. The remaining four measures of the chorus allow Dolphy to dissipate his intensity and come back inside harmonically to allow for the entrance of the soloist to follow.

After the relatively terse piano solo of only four choruses there are two additional choruses by Dolphy that I have labeled X1 and X2. Note how the primary rhythmic level of the improvisation is similar to that of the first two choruses and to corresponding vicinities in the other variants. This return to relatively simpler rhythmic values and the ending melody of X2 provides an appropriate intervallic and gestural link to the composed melody that immediately

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follows. This transition bears similarity to the way Charlie Parker used to link his improvisations with the catalytic referents. In both cases it is clear to hear the similarity of the composed melody with the improvised linear material.

The general form of the solo fits the broad model established on the Far Cry and Stockholm Sessions variants whereby: a) phrase logic within the bebop rhythmic domain issues out of the composed melody for the first vicinity (2 or 3 choruses) b) in this section in all variants sonority, pitch contour, and overall density in combination with an intense performance practice take precedent over exact congruity of the improvised line with the harmonic scheme of the c.r. In the Stockholm Sessions and Last Date variants extended sonorities (multiphonics, trills, rapid scales) are explored and frequently the rhythmic behavior of the improvisation is non-metrically bound. c) there is a resolution of the preceding section brought about by a return to mean rhythmic values and an intentional realignment of the melodic logic with the harmonic scheme.

This observation regarding the manner of forming a solo stands in contrast to an evaluation of Dolphy's performance at the 1961 Monterey Jazz Festival by Don DeMichael:

While his [Dolphy's] flute work was generally good, part of his solo sounded as if he were trying to imitate birds...His use of quarter tones on "[My Favorite] Things" led nowhere. And this seemed his greatest hangup; none of his solos had a clear direction.

What exactly constitutes a clear direction in that writer's mind is unclear from his review but I assume that he must be referring to the type of player who lacked the musicality that Dolphy

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consistently maintained. Also we should keep in mind the trance-like effect of ostinatos which permeate extended performances of modal treatments of "My Favorite Things" and how these repetitive vamps would color a listener's perception of the soloists' degree of directedness. In reference to the birdsong imitation and use of quartertones it is highly probable that these were not gratuitously incorporated. When interviewed months later about his performances with the Coltrane group, Dolphy relates that birdsong imitation is an extended aspect of flute playing. (DeMichael "Answer" 21). His use of quartertones stems from this interest and an interest in Indian classical music. Of course like the mutable time feel and vocalization features already mentioned, microtonal inflections have always a feature of the practice of jazz.

Journalists were not the only critics. Miles Davis made the following comment during a blindfold test published in Downbeat just before Dolphy's death:

That's got to be Eric Dolphy ---nobody else could sound that bad! The next time I

see him I'm going to step on his, foot. You print that. I think that he's ridiculous.

He's a sad...Just put he's a real sad shhhhhhhhh, that's all! The composition is sad.

Dolphy had read this while backstage at Le Chat Qui Pêche club after a performance and was duly depressed by it (Schnabel). Though Miles never had the opportunity to step on Dolphy's foot, he later made his own recordings in free and modal settings which feature the bass clarinet, an instrument which Dolphy nearly single-handedly brought to prominence in modern jazz.⁵ In the late 1960's Miles also abandoned the bebop quintet instrumentation and the straight chorus format, both aspects that Dolphy had changed years earlier with his recording Out to

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Lunch and with extended compositions such as "Burning Spear".

Could it be that Dolphy's music posed an even greater challenge to listeners than the more avant-garde musicians of the time because of the degree of familiarity it contained? That is, the effect of Dolphy's improvisations was so much the more startling because of the relatively traditional frameworks and instrumental setups within which they were situated. One can imagine, for example, Dolphy's improvisations taking place in the context of a rhythm section of only bass and drums as was the case in Ornette Coleman's groups of the early sixties. The overall effect would be altogether different, perhaps with less overall tension and hence not within the same lines of critique as the extant realizations.

Local Level Attributes in Dolphy's solos on "Miss Ann"

There are a number of features that Dolphy consistently incorporated into the solos on "Miss Ann." The prevalence of usage indicates that these were part of Dolphy's basic

vocabulary. The local level refers to the short phrases and gestures that cover from two beats to a few measures. Two of the most distinguishable attributes are the use of quartal and pentatonic intervals and the concurrent use of octave transfers or leaps of register.

Note in the transcriptions the frequency with which Dolphy initiates a phrase beginning on the note or pitch class that he just terminated. This simple but consistent feature is another reminder that Dolphy was indeed thinking about issues like realizing a well thought out solo, one that was connected with itself. Sometimes this pivoting on a specific pitch will be drawn out for measures. The most memorable example being the third chorus of the Stockholm Sessions

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variant where “G” is sustained and elaborated for nearly six measures starting into the third chorus of the solo.

This G is revisited in a terse bluesy line that begins in the fifth chorus. Keep in mind that certain notes (fingerings) and certain tactile activities are comfortable, idiomatic, solid-feeling actions to execute with the saxophone. This G is fingered with four fingers of the left hand depressing the keys and this fingering supports the horn. With the C overtone phrases this fingering is alternated with the low C fingering (all fingers of right hand depressed). It is possible to envision playing more with the entire hand than with any given combination of fingers and this leads one to play with a more emphatically percussive quality. It is interesting to note how this type of usage (the C overtone complex over the G min quartal harmony) becomes more of a staple linear feature. By the time of the Last Date variant, pentatonic lines and arpeggiated suspended chords appear at various transpositions in all registers.

What make the use of quartal intervals striking are the unexpected turns of contour and the frequency of these angular lines. Generally speaking, melodies that have a disjunct linear contour do not lend well to the fast tempos of the “Miss Ann” recordings. When they are then realized they seem all the more exciting. In the later Last Date variant these features are more prevalent than in the other variants.

It is ironic that several of the aspects from the bebop model which Dolphy retained in his compositional and improvisational output were the very aspects which when so extended called into question the soundness of his intention. So diverse are the elements of the progressive art, jazz, that highly original musicians who intend to create by extending the traditional features of

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the music are deemed iconoclasts who seek to destroy that tradition. Or as with Dolphy, a reputation is fashioned in media that has little to do with the reality of his greatness.

Also keep in mind that this project deals with only Dolphy’s alto saxophone style as heard through one catalytic referent, and that the majority of his recordings on bass clarinet and flute yield a like degree of sophistication of technique and improvisational approach. Since Dolphy tended to take advantage of instrument-specific idiosyncrasies, there is bound to be something unique in his approach on each of the three instruments he came to master.

Ethnomusicological Considerations

As an afterward, I would like to address several key ethnomusicological questions regarding the transcriptions. First to note is the inherent biases and inadequacies of the result. That is to say, no transcription of improvisation can be completely neutral. Nor, I contend,

would we want a mechanically-produced, perfect, and hence overly complex transcription produced without consideration of the many nuances that direct a practitioner of the music to the most reasonable realization of how the music being transcribed should be notated. The transcriptions therefore could be successfully used as a means to recreate the solos with a high degree of detail given the performer had advanced proficiency and an assimilation of jazz practice. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the introduction, the recordings themselves must fill in details where the transcriptions leave off. It is understood that the lines written should be executed with a rhythmic feel appropriate to the context of late bebop phrasing. Where micro-inflections of the rhythmic flow are present an arrow in the direction of the lag is indicated.

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I have chosen to represent Dolphy's improvisations in a musical notation system that is appropriate given his training. Dolphy played the clarinet in orchestra and concert bands as well as alto saxophone in dance bands since his high school days and was known by all accounts to be an excellent reader, so western notation was very familiar material. He was also a composer who used the system and kept sketchbooks of ideas, so I conclude that he believed musical notation to be a viable way to represent his musical thought. I have also shown how the logic of his composed melodies bears similarity to that of his improvised lines, thereby highlighting the continuum of an aspect of Dolphy's musical thought.

As the transcription is introduced with the transcription process and a disclaimer regarding possible inaccuracies, it should be used as any tool that is provided to aid analysis. Before analysis in this project began, scrutiny was executed in the rendering of the transcriptions. This was to assure that points in consideration exist.

To illuminate the complexity of trying to extrapolate from transcriptions to issues of social and cultural processes, I provide the following excerpt from Vladimir Simosko's Eric Dolphy: A Musical Biography and Discography:

Certain aspects of the socio-cultural environment in which Eric Dolphy lived are extremely complex issues. It would be a major undertaking to analyze exactly how he coped with the problems of being a Negro in the United States in the mid-twentieth century, or the problems of trying to remain economically solvent as a creative musician involved primarily in jazz in this culture. In the same way, it is impossible to derive precisely the motives and influences which shaped his life and art, for these are elements of

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a man's inner being which are seldom shared, and indeed are sometimes misunderstood by the man himself. Unless the individual in question had chosen analyze himself or to communicate these extremely and specifically personal matters by committing them to writing, there is no way to divine them after the fact.

Nevertheless, the transcriptions allow us to know in detail the ways that Dolphy is taking improvisation to its logical extreme by incorporating expanded range, sonorities, angularity, and celerity combined with an abundance of intervals from the upper strata of the harmony. In this way it shows us exactly how Dolphy is "out" of the normal mode of jazz improvisation in this period.

It is well known that Dolphy, who had been touring in Europe with Charles Mingus,

chose to stay in Europe because he felt that there he had freedom to explore his concepts and share these with a more receptive audience. So it reinforces the point that Dolphy had to go out of his home country to be aptly understood by the general audience. Or to put it simply he had to go out to play “out” if he expected to find steady work. Buddy Collette, one of Dolphy’s teachers, mentions in the film Last Date that he had told Eric early on that he may need to “tone it down a little” if he expected to find work (in L.A.) and points out that Mingus too had a hard time finding reception until he went to New York.

Of course, by the time of the Last Date recording Dolphy had already recorded more extended ensemble compositions (“Burning Spear”) and other music that relied more on motivic elaboration in the context of a collaborative aleatoric ensemble (Out to Lunch) than on

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improvisation over a chorus form. He was also working on a string quartet at the time of his death. So it is possible that the selections Dolphy chose to perform with European musicians were not his pressing intrigue at the time of the recordings even while he clearly is the most inspired soloist.

Dolphy had begun to establish lasting contact with musicians and expatriates throughout Europe and had been contracted for a year of performances in various cities. So it is clear that his intention to remain outside of America would have been borne out had he lived. That he felt the need to do reveals his aversion to the less than satisfactory and sparse working arrangements in America and the general lack of acceptance for the type of creative music projects that occupied his last years there.

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E♭ alto saxophone

Miss Ann

E. Dolphy

Medium Up Jazz, 4 bar drum solo intro

A⁷ alt.

7 #11 b9 7 maj7 b13 #11 b9 b13 7 #11 b13 #11 b9 7 D⁷ alt #11 b13 7 maj7 #9 b9 1 b9 b 7 #9 3

G min. quartal b13 3 4 3 b9 b13 7 3 b9 b13 7 4 3 b13 b9 Eb min. 7 7 b13 13 b9 b13 #11 3 7

D⁷ #9 b9 #11 b13 5 #11 b9 #9 F^{#7} 1 2 3 #11 5 6 7 5 C[#] min. 7 7 3 5 6 7 1 4 9 b13 #9 #11 D⁷ alt. #9 #11 5 6 b13

Ab⁹ sus

fine on final chorus

5 bars →

Play head twice at beginning and end

Transcribed by T. Paynter

(Eb alto sax.) ♩ = 189

Ch.#
↓

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

XI

X2

ghost

port.

A⁷ alt.

D⁷ alt.

related

scoop

molto

lagged
(→)

1

Handwritten musical score for guitar, featuring ten staves (1-10) and two additional staves (X1, X2). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings.

Staff 1: Treble clef. Includes a *port.* (portamento) marking and a triplet of eighth notes.

Staff 2: Treble clef. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.

Staff 3: Treble clef. Includes a triplet of eighth notes and a *port.* marking.

Staff 4: Treble clef. Empty staff.

Staff 5: Treble clef. Empty staff.

Staff 6: Treble clef. Includes a triplet of eighth notes and a *port.* marking.

Staff 7: Treble clef. Includes a triplet of eighth notes, a *scoop* marking, and a *molto* marking.

Staff 8: Treble clef. Includes a *8va* (octave) marking and a *loco* marking.

Staff X1: Treble clef. Includes a *8va* marking and a *loco* marking.

Staff X2: Treble clef. Includes a triplet of eighth notes, a *port.* marking, and a *molto* marking.

Staff 9: Treble clef. Includes a *lagged* marking and a *molto* marking.

Staff 10: Treble clef. Includes a triplet of eighth notes and a *port.* marking.

THIS TUNE BEGINS WITH A FOUR MEASURE DRUM SOLO.

medium up bebop some suggested voicings* for E. Dophy "Miss Ann" T. Paynter

Handwritten musical notation for a 14-measure form, organized into four systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The notation includes chord symbols, voicings, and measure numbers.

System 1:

- Measure 1: G^b/C^7 (C^7 alt.)
- Measure 2: F^7 alt.
- Measure 3: F^7 alt.
- Measure 4: F^7 alt.

System 2:

- Measure 5: B^b min. quartal
- Measure 6: $F^{\#}$ min. 9
- Measure 7: $B^7(13)$
- Measure 8: $B^7(13)$

System 3:

- Measure 9: $F^7(\#11)$
- Measure 10: $A^7(\#11)$
- Measure 11: E min. 9
- Measure 12: D^b^7 alt.

System 4:

- Measure 13: B sus 13 (A maj $^7/B$)
- Measure 14: B sus 13 (A maj $^7/B$)

Additional notes and markings:

- (omit root when bass present)
- OB-SERVE fine (on 2x through head)
- play 2 choruses of head at beginning & end (14 measure form)

* voicings only; create rhythmic aspects - bass walks pretty much throughout;

repeat essential tones